

Questions from Feb. 19, 2007 Public Information Meeting

The following questions were asked by citizens who attended a public information meeting at Bradley Creek Elementary School on Feb. 19, 2007. Participants were asked to list questions they had on comment forms provided at the meeting.

Length of time to complete repairs?

There are several projects involved in repairing the NEI system. See this [fact sheet](#) for details.

Why so many “studies” that cost major dollars?

Two major studies were conducted that outlined problem areas, as well as a plan of action for repairs and improvements. An in-depth look at all facets of the city's operations was conducted, as well as field testing of city pump stations and underground sewer pipes. The information compiled in the reviews helped the city determine the areas that need to be fixed in order of priority, as well as long-term planning for operations and maintenance of the sewer system.

Way of paying for repairs?

All city water and sewer customers pay fees every other month. The amount of fees is based on how much water is used. The city uses those fees, called “user fees,” coupled with other development fee revenue, to provide funding to operate its sewer system. It also uses those fees for the repayment of debt associated with construction projects, including major repair work, that are financed via bonds or other methods for borrowing money. City Council makes decisions about how funds are used and where the funds come from, but historically repairs have been funded through user fees.

The city's current construction financing plan includes approximately \$82 million in sewer rehabilitation projects over the next 10 years, including the city's share to repair the NEI. The financing plan incorporates rate increases of the bimonthly user fees to help pay for the costs that will be incurred when the city issues bonds to pay for the repairs. Last year, rates increased 6 percent, or about \$2 a month for an average homeowner. This year, the financing plan includes a 10-percent increase, which would equal about \$4 a month for the average homeowner.

Why do citizens have to pay for all of this?

All city water and sewer users pay fees every other month. Those fees are based on how much water is used. The city uses those fees, called “user fees,” to operate its sewer system. City Council makes decisions about how funds are used and where the funds come from, but historically repairs have been funded through revenue from the user fees.

Is there any building moratorium?

Yes, there is a moratorium in place that was issued by the state Division of Water Quality in April, 2006. The moratorium prohibits any additional sewer extensions from being connected to the NEI until specified repairs have been made to the pipeline.

Broadly defined, a sewer line that connects to a private residence/office building to a sewer main pipe is called a "tap." A pipeline that connects to a sewer main pipe or other system that serves several buildings is called an "extension." The current state moratorium in place prohibits only extensions, not individual taps. See the attached links for more details and definitions from the state.

Regulations about when a sewer extension permit is needed:

<http://www.ncwaterquality.org/percs/Collection%20Systems/CollectionSystemsPoliciesandProcedures.html#Permit>

A diagram that shows when a sewer extension permit is needed:

<http://www.ncwaterquality.org/percs/Collection%20Systems/documents/BuildingSewer.pdf>

How can we stop from overloading the existing capacity until new is capacity added?

The city and county are reviewing several options to reduce the amount of wastewater flowing through the NEI. One of the major components is a review currently being conducted that would pinpoint any areas where there are holes or cracks in sewer pipes and manholes that might allow ground water or rain water to seep into the wastewater system. If these types of holes or cracks are found, they will be fixed, thereby reducing the amount of groundwater and rain water infiltrating the system.

Why 24-inch force main, the Shipyard pipe work seemed larger in diagram?

Depending on what repair option is chosen, the new force main pipes will be either 24-inch or 30-inch. The 2,000-foot portion replaced along Shipyard Boulevard was 30 inches to accommodate future capacity.

Will the recommended blue line path (for 7,000-foot pipe relocation) overlay the existing gravity sewer line?

No, the blue path will replace approximately 7,000 feet of force main that currently runs through the swampy area of Hewlett's Creek, roughly between Pine Grove Drive and South College Road. See this [map](#) to show where the "blue line" path will go.

What can we do to keep project on track?

The city generally uses two different methods to keep large projects such as this running on time. 1) Employ a project manager who works with various contractors to keep work on schedule and 2) Incorporate incentives and/or penalties into contracts to make sure the company doing the work will be rewarded or penalized, depending on how well the schedule is met.

Are additional hook-ups being allowed?

There is a moratorium in place that was issued by the state Division of Water Quality in April, 2006. The moratorium prohibits any additional sewer "extensions" from being connected to the NEI until specified repairs have been made to the pipeline.

Broadly defined, a sewer line that connects to a private residence/office building to a sewer main pipe is called a "tap." A pipeline that connects to a sewer main pipe or other system that serves several buildings is called an "extension." The current state moratorium in place prohibits only extensions, not individual taps.

How will the city pay the fine to the state for the spill (where will money come from)?

The state fined the city \$30,038.51 for the spill that occurred just off Pine Grove Drive in November, 2006. The city has paid that fine from user fees, which are fees all city water and sewer users pay based on how much water they use.

When will 7000-foot route be determined?

The route has been finalized. It is delineated in blue on the attached [map](#).

Note: Several others questions were also asked at the meeting – this document will be updated as the answers are completed.